

CONNECTIONS

JULY 2008

FROM: Kathy Koehn
LDR Greensburg
605 W Illinois
Greensburg, Kansas 67054
620-388-3860 (Cell)
620-723-3339 (Office)
ldrgreen@live.com

CHANGES

I know it has been awhile since a Connections Newsletter has been written but so much has happened.

Chuck, as you know, left us and Wilmer Wegele took his position. I stayed on as his assistant. I am also a Case Manager for SCKTRO. Wilmer, after working three weeks, decided to leave due to unforeseen complications. Gale from LDR asked me if I would like to step up and take the job as Volunteer Coordinator and I said yes. Crazy or what? I had already been answering e-mails etc. so I am familiar with most of it. But now it is up to me to write the Connections.

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES

I am asking for volunteers to write a little bit about their experiences while volunteering here at Greensburg and I would like to put that into my newsletter if possible. The first one is from Doris Wyland from Montana. She writes:

“My LCMS Church group decided to go on another “rebuild” this year as the New Orleans/Biloxi Habitat Build last year was so rewarding. This year I wanted definitely to be part of the group to be able to experience what they did last year. Even though the situations were almost entirely different, the returning feelings were very similar. I had experienced strong wind before as a young mother of three, fearful of our lives because we lived in a trailer house broadside to a hill (in the direction of the wind). We took safe refuge in the basement of friends close by, and even though our trailer bounced and some possessions were broken, and repairs had to be made, little did it prepare me for what I saw in Greensburg. I lost many tears on the work site when I traveled around the house my group was roofing, siding and caulking as I picked up nails, shards of ceramic, mirror and pieces of metal. I love/cherish some of my parent’s and even my grandparent’s old dishes/old pictures etc. that I have on display in my home. Now finding these as hazard pieces, made me realize these were possibly treasures of someone else’s family I was picking up. How could they have come up from their “hiding” place after the tornado and find they had nothing recognizable left to call their own? Their tangible mementoes were all gone

or at best forever ruined. How precious to have family alive to be able to hug, say 'I love you,' and share tears without shame.

Most of my weeks stay at the Village was working in the Kitchen helping to prepare meals for the volunteers that came from the job sites to nourish their tired bodies. I cherish the memory of one lady who had dutifully put on sun block and basically was filthy-looking from the wind blowing the sand on the job site, even making rings on her neck. I was reminded over and over that week how we must look to God, who created us perfect and spotless and how sins stick to us, making us ugly before Him. And then Jesus could say to us, "I love you" - enough to die in our place, so eternity for us can be in Heaven with Him. YES, thank you Greensburg people for all your stories, the books I can now read, and for giving me the opportunity to see God at work in you. May God continue to bless us all. A thankful Montana volunteer, Doris."

Do I have any more volunteers that would be willing to do this for me? If so, e-mail me with your experiences. If I don't get any volunteers, I may have to recruit some.

This week, July 20-26 finds us with about 150 volunteers. Some are working with Mennonite Housing and some are working with us. Mennonite Housing and USDA have started their next group of 10 homes. They have funding to build a total of 50 homes.

We have logged a total of 115,000 hours as of the last of June. We are reimbursed from FEMA \$7.50/hr for each volunteer hour logged - that helps pay off the city's debt that we have with FEMA for cleaning and hauling off debris. So as you can see each and every volunteer is important. Please keep coming.

We are looking for more skilled volunteers as the work progresses forward. Skilled carpenters, plumbers, electricians etc. are greatly needed, especially for the time of September on. We will try to accommodate all groups though. Don't put off your trip just because you don't feel skilled. There is work for all to do. Are you retired and wonder what to do with your time? Come volunteer in Greensburg.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Habitat for Humanity has started on their first three homes. They supply their own volunteers.

As of Friday of last week, 160 new construction permits have been issued. So you see Greensburg is growing.

90% of the town has utilities working.

The new water tower is up and working.

We have hauled 58,000 loads of debris to the landfill.

They are started on the new Dillons Store. Yeah!!!

This week we are moving another one of our clients into her new home - some of you may know her as the "Cinnamon Roll Lady." She is 85 years old and an inspiration to all who meet her. The groups that have worked on her home have all been beneficiaries of her wonderful cinnamon rolls.

May God bless all of you that have volunteered here already. Plan your return trip. And those that are still coming, we welcome you. And those who haven't booked anything yet, give it some serious thought. I know you will get a blessing out of coming.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

God Bless,
Kathy Koehn
LDR Volunteer Coordinator